



**TEXAS
FREIGHT
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**



Texas
Department
of Transportation

Freight Advisory Committee

July 20, 2017, 8:30 a.m.
TranStar, Houston, Texas

Attendees

Committee Member	Organization	Attendance
Judge Ed Emmett, Chair	Harris County	Present
Steve Boecking, Vice Chair	Hillwood Properties	Present
Ron Beeson	Lubrizol Corp.	Designee Present (Scott Campbell)
Russell Boening	Texas Farm Bureau	Designee Present (Glen Jones)
Randy Brogoitti	Brogoitti Construction	Present
Paul Cristina	BNSF Railway	Present
Drew Crutcher	Landgraf, Crutcher & Associates	Present
Bryan Daniel	Governor's Office of Economic Development and Tourism	Not Present
Michael Dyll	Texas International Freight	Present
John Esparza	Texas Trucking Association	Not Present
Roger Guenther	Port of Houston Authority	Present
Luis Hinojosa	Uni-Trade Forwarding, LLC	Not Present
Judge Clay Lewis Jenkins	Dallas County	Designee Present (Martin Molloy)
John LaRue	Port of Corpus Christi Authority	Present
Brenda Mainwaring	Union Pacific Railroad	Present
Kevin McIntosh	Kansas City Southern (KCSR)	Not Present
Jeff Moseley	Texas Association of Business	Present
Rolando Ortiz	Killam Development, Ltd.	Present
Keith Patridge	McAllen Economic Development Corp.	Not Present
Juan-Carlos Ruck	HEB	Not Present
K. Alan Russell	The Tecma Group of Companies	Not Present
Carlton Schwab	Texas Economic Development Council	Not Present
Todd Stewart	Gulf Wind International	Not Present
Jack Todd	Trinity Industries, Inc.	Not Present

Texas Transportation Commissioners		
Laura Ryan	Texas Transportation Commission	Present

Ex-Officio Members		
Christopher Evilia	Waco MPO	Present
Erin Ford	Retired – Houston County	Present
Senator Sylvia R. Garcia	Texas State Senate, District 6	Not Present
Clark Greer	Coca-Cola	Present
Rep. Armando Martinez	Texas House Member, District 39	Not Present
Rep. Sergio Munoz, Jr.	Texas House Member, District 36	Not Present
Rep. Poncho Nevarez	Texas House Member, District 74	Not Present
Mayor Pete Saenz	City of Laredo	Not Present
Gerry Schwebel	IBC Bank	Not Present
Danny Smith	United Parcel Service	Present
Paul Treangen	TNW Corp.	Present
Matt Woodruff	Kirby Corporation	Not Present
Staff		
Barbara Koslov	Judge Emmett's Office	Present
Janiece Longoria	Port Houston	Present
Bruce Mann	Port Houston	Present
Tyson Moeller	Union Pacific	Present

TxDOT, TTI, UNT, and FHWA			
Lauren Garduño	TxDOT	Emily Clisby	TxDOT
Caroline Mays	TxDOT	Norma Y. Garza	TxDOT
Sondra Johnson	TxDOT	Jerry Haddican	TxDOT
Roger Beall	TxDOT	Kale Driemeier	TxDOT
Tim Juarez	TxDOT	Raquelle Lewis	TxDOT
Quincy Allen	TxDOT	Melissa Meyer	TxDOT
Pete Alvarez	TxDOT	Eliza Paul	TxDOT
Bob Bielek	TxDOT	Lance Simmons	TxDOT
Charles Airiohuodion	TxDOT	Paul Reitz	TxDOT
Arielle Carchidi	TxDOT	Debra Richmond	TxDOT
Gil Wilson	TxDOT	Allan Rutter	TTI
Michael Bomba	UNT	Georgi Ann Jasenovec	FHWA

Freight Plan Consultant Team			
Paula Dowell	Cambridge Systematics	Joe Bryan	WSP USA
Isabel Victoria	Cambridge Systematics	Lindsay Wood	WSP USA
Elizabeth Welch	Cambridge Systematics	Jana Rosenthal	Atkins
Will Walter	Cambridge Systematics	Kent McLemore	Atkins
Marie Lewis Adams	Nancy Ledbetter & Assoc.		

Other Attendees			
Roni Archer	Pasadena Chamber	Bob Dickinson	SETRPC
Chad Burke	Economic Alliance	Clif Eduards	HC Pct. 4
Gary Bushell	Alliance for I-69	Braulio Garza	HCMPO
Kaitlyn Conner	Economic Alliance	Stephanie Guillot	HNTB
Eduardo Calvo	HNTB	Jeff Hathcock	NCTCOG
Maureen Crocker	GCRD	Alex Herrmann	C&M Associates
Luis Diaz	HCMPO	Nishant Kukadia	CH2M
Patti Knudson Joiner	Knudson L.P.	Marco Montes	HC Pct. 4
Sherry Pifer	SH 130	Regina Recinos	GHP
Kim Sachtleben	Costello	Robert Sakowitz	Hazak Corp/Endeavor
Christopher Sallese	Dannenbaum	Jeffrey Van Schaick	GWRR
Danny Schnautz	Clark Freight Lines	Angie Stoddard	CH2M
Darrin Willer	HNTB	Ken Williams	Williams & Assoc.
Michael Wilson	Port Freeport		

Meeting Action Items:

- Project team will update truck-involved highway crashes map legends to show crashes by segment, not by mile
- Project team will review crashes vs. VMT within the needs assessment safety category
- Project team will review TxDOT Project Tracker to make sure all projects are included
- Project team will compare updated highway project list with old list to show changes
- Project team will facilitate discussion with ports to revise port project list
- Project team will refine air cargo list to those projects providing direct access to airports
- Project team will provide border/ports-of-entry project list
- Project team will provide redlined chapters so members can see what changed between previous and updated TFMP, and tables of chapter changes vs. requirements under the FAST Act
- Project team will update chapters in response to TxFAC comments

1. Welcome & Introductions

Judge Emmett welcomed the group. He recognized TranStar and thanked the organization for hosting the meeting. TranStar is a monument to government cooperation between the City of Houston, TxDOT, Harris County, and METRO. He offered to provide a tour of TranStar's emergency operations center following the meeting. He invited each of the TxFAC members to introduce themselves.

Texas Transportation Commissioner Laura Ryan introduced herself and also thanked the group. She acknowledged the important work of the committee, and said she had spent time in the last few months traveling to various places in the state (most recently Laredo and Baytown) in order to better understand freight's role in these regions. Freight is so significant to the state, and needs to be handled separately from all the other transportation work that the Commission

takes on. She is grateful to participate in the TxFAC and would like to be able to help in any way she can.

Judge Emmett stated TxDOT has put Texas ahead of the curve in dealing with freight issues. It starts at the top; a Texas Transportation Commissioner has been present at almost every TxFAC meeting, which shows its importance to TxDOT. He recognized the attendance of Port of Houston Authority Chair Janiece Longoria.

He noted today's meeting will have a lot of moving parts and invited members to ask questions along the way. The team will discuss draft project lists, but they are not yet final. The project needs to keep moving forward, so he reminded members not to get bogged down in statistics. Judge Emmett mentioned a recent article he read about small towns declining across America; the article referenced a few towns that managed to grow, which Texas towns Fulshear and Dripping Springs – which are mainly growing because of their proximity to Houston and Austin. Statistics, even when accurate, can lead to the wrong conclusions. The role of this committee is to provide “common sense” checks on the data analysis.

2. Recap of May 11 Meeting, Freight Workshops and Summary of Agenda and Expected Outcomes

Caroline Mays welcomed the committee and provided a recap of the last TxFAC meeting in May 2017. During that meeting, the team discussed Texas Highway Freight Network (THFN) designation as well as Critical Rural Freight Corridors (CRFCs). There were some adjustments along the way and the TxFAC agreed on a draft THFN. While there was significant discussion on CRFCs, the TxFAC did not make a decision. During this meeting, the team will present a refined version and will follow up on other items from last time in more depth. The team will also discuss results of the statewide stakeholder workshops. Ms. Mays provided an overview of the packet items in members' folders, and noted the lunch speaker would deliver a presentation on new federal grant program: Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA).

A member of the TxDOT Houston District provided an overview of safety and evacuation procedures.

Paula Dowell discussed the second round of statewide stakeholder workshops, held in June 2017. These workshops included a balance of public and private-sector participation. Attendees were able to review the freight network, help identify needs and opportunities, and provide input on project prioritization. Input received will help the project team refine the network and project selection process. She noted Cambridge Systematics is leading several statewide freight plans, and Texas has by far the most involved Advisory Committee and stakeholders.

Caroline Mays thanked committee members for the success of the workshops, including those members who hosted, attended, and/or encouraged local stakeholders to attend; specifically Clark Greer, Steve Boecking, and Martin Malloy. TxFAC participation improved turnout and brought greater credibility to the process.

3. Draft Texas Multimodal Freight System

Paula Dowell provided an overview of the Draft Final Texas Multimodal Freight Network (TMFN), which includes rail, port and waterway, air cargo airport, and border/port-of-entry systems in addition to the Texas Highway Freight Network. The TMFN includes all Class I and Short Line rail corridors, water ports with more than two million short tons annually, Texas airports in the U.S. top 50 air cargo airports plus Laredo considering its strategic importance on the border

4. Draft Final Texas Highway Network

Paula Dowell delivered a presentation on evaluation and designation of the Texas Highway Freight Network (THFN). The project team developed a list of criteria; scored, summed, weighted, and ranked each highway segment; and developed a proposed candidate network. Components of the THFN include Texas' portion of the National Highway Freight Network (NHFN); highways which scored average or better in the evaluation process; all highways on the Texas Trunk System; and at the TxFAC's request, all highways included in the previously-adopted freight network. The final THFN includes 21,793 miles.

5. Designation of Critical Freight Corridors

Critical Urban Freight Corridors

Paula Dowell provided an overview of Critical Urban Freight Corridor (CUFC) designation. MPOs within urbanized areas with populations of 500,000 or more led the process and submitted a total of 299 miles for inclusion (80 percent of possible total mileage). TxDOT is responsible for designating the remaining 73 miles among the urbanized areas with populations less than 500,000.

Erin Ford asked if that means there are 372 total miles of critical urban corridors; Ms. Dowell said yes. She added that the corridors undergo a rolling designation process; they can change whenever needed.

Judge Emmett asked to refresh his memory on what it means for a corridor to be "designated" as critical. Ms. Dowell replied that it seems like a bigger deal than it really is. The FAST Act determined that out of the federal funding pot, some amount of money could only be spent on projects that are a) part of a state Freight Plan and b) part of the NHFN. It is not new money.

Caroline Mays added that the critical corridor designation helps TxDOT to draw on those funds, which total about \$100 million a year for Texas. The projects have to be let and ready for construction within 18 months in order to be eligible for the funds.

Paula Dowell continued, discussing TxDOT's approach for designating the remaining 73 miles of CUFCs. The process incorporates FAST Act criteria such as connecting to intermodal facilities or the Primary Highway Freight or interstate system; providing an alternative highway option for goods movement; and/or serving major freight generators/logistics centers. TxDOT also incorporated stakeholder input, and reviewed corridors for eligible projects in the Unified Transportation Program (UTP). There are 10 corridors proposed for a total of 72.7 miles.

Judge Emmett asked who has the ultimate decision on which corridors are designated.

Ms. Mays said TxDOT is presenting the corridors to the TxFAC for concurrence; TxDOT already had a conference call with the MPOs, who agreed with the process. Ultimately, however, the Commission is responsible for approving the Freight Plan and its components; the TxFAC is advisory.

Judge Emmett stated the MPO-designated miles cannot be touched; the TxFAC can discuss the TxDOT-designated miles. About one-third of the list goes to the Beaumont/Port Arthur area, and Laredo also gets a considerable number of miles. He asked if any TxFAC members had comments or feedback, and if any member would make a motion to approve the list.

Chris Evilia stated he had not heard any feedback contrary to the list; MPOs are appreciative of TxDOT's efforts to designate the remaining urban miles.

Rolando Ortiz recused himself from the decision process, as some of the corridors are near property his company owns.

Erin Ford moved to approve the list, and Steve Boecking seconded. All other members were in favor.

Critical Rural Freight Corridors

Paula Dowell continued on to discuss Critical Rural Freight Corridors (CRFCs). TxDOT leads the selection process, and can designate 745 miles. During the initial screening process, the project team examined and scored corridors, focused on providing connectivity to the Primary Highway Freight System (PHFS), and included stakeholder input. The process resulted in 2,198 miles of candidate corridors.

Caroline Mays continued, stating the team presented the draft list of candidate corridors at the last meeting, but TxDOT has since refined the list based on TxFAC comments and input received at the stakeholder workshops. There was considerable support across the state for certain corridors that did not get a lot of mention from the TxFAC. TxDOT also noticed the rural corridor designation process did not match the FAST Act, and decided to refine the process based on FAST Act requirements. Those requirements specify corridors that have a minimum of 25 percent average annual daily traffic (AADT) from trucks; provide access to energy areas; connect to the PHFS or interstate system; connect to international ports of entry; or provide access to significant air, rail, water, or other freight facilities.

Ms. Dowell said the team utilized the FAST Act criteria for scoring. Corridors could receive one point per criteria for a total of 5 points depending on whether or not they met the requirements, so each corridor ended up with a score from 1 to 5. She showed a map of the scored corridors which illustrated how many FAST Act criteria each corridor met. There are 2,667 miles of corridors with a score of 3 or more, which will become the new candidates for the Critical Rural Freight Corridors. There are many similarities between the previous and updated lists of candidate corridors.

Ms. Mays said those corridors meeting 4 or 5 criteria rise to the top. There are 8 corridors, for a total 649 miles, which have the highest scores. TxDOT proposes including these as designated CRFCs; that leaves 96 miles still to designate. The action needed from the committee today is a) to approve the 8 corridors, and b) to designate the remaining 96 miles.

Judge Emmett noted this was a good time to discuss the I-69 designation. If a highway is already designated as an interstate, does it already have access to certain funding categories? Does it make sense to include any future parts of I-69 within the CRFCs?

Lauren Garduño explained that TxDOT has various highway funding categories which focus on different strategic elements of the transportation system. The Commission placed recent emphasis on connectivity corridor (UTP Category 4) funding, which will be a primary driver of funding for the freight network and future interstate system. I-69 as an interstate is already captured in Category 4 funding. TxDOT is working to incorporate the criteria used within the Freight Plan into its overall project selection process. The short answer is yes, I-69 is already eligible for funding.

Judge Emmett asked if the committee needed talk through the 8 corridors. The biggest change from the last meeting seemed to be that the highway that parallels the gulf coast (SH 35) used to be included in the draft CRFCs, but it has been removed. Knowing that US 59 will be upgraded to I-69, it does not make sense to use up miles on a parallel corridor.

Caroline Mays added that once the corridors are upgraded to become I-69, FHWA will revise the National Primary Highway Freight System. Including I-69 as a CRFC would not advance it further as a corridor for funding.

Randy Brogoitti asked if the same rationale applied to future I-69 corridors both north and south of Houston; Ms. Mays replied yes.

Erin Ford inquired if SH 21, a connector between I-35 and I-45 through College Station to Crocket, was considered for inclusion.

Lauren Garduño replied that SH 21 was scored, but did not meet three or more criteria.

Ms. Mays added the scoring process is difficult because if a corridor is currently not good for trucks, then trucks won't use it as much, and it will not meet the 25 percent trucks criteria. It's a chicken or egg problem.

Judge Emmett suggested the committee review the 8 corridors, beginning with US 87/SH 35 from Victoria to FM 1593.

Commissioner Ryan asked which criterion the corridor did not meet. Ms. Dowell replied the corridor was shown as scoring in the "4 or 5" category, which means it could have met all criteria.

Judge Emmett moved on to the second corridor, SH 6/US 281 from I-20 to SH 220.

Ms. Mays stated the project team tried to find logical termini for each corridor.

Roger Guenther asked whether all the corridors have to be funded to be eligible for federal money as a CRFC. I-69 will happen whether or not it is included in the CRFCs; it's just the color of money that's different.

Judge Emmett added that once TxDOT submits the list, the dollar amount will far exceed \$100 million, so the committee is spending a lot of effort on something that is way beyond the potential pot of money at stake.

Judge Emmett discussed the next three corridors, US 84 from Lubbock to I-20, US 87 from I-20 to San Angelo, and US 79 from Austin to I-45 with no comment from the TxFAC.

Judge Emmett noted corridor #6, US 290 from Austin to Houston, does beg discussion because another option was SH 71 from Austin to Columbus. He said he drives SH 71 frequently and does not see many trucks. US 290 seems to make more sense.

Rolando Ortiz agreed, and noted diverting truck traffic to US 290 might alleviate congestion on I-10 around the Columbus area.

Judge Emmett discussed corridor #7, US 83 from FM 2098 to McAllen. Laredo District Engineer Pete Alvarez stated that corridor connects several international bridge crossings.

Judge Emmett concluded with corridor #8, US 277/US 83 from US 82 to Abilene. He asked if any members wanted to drop any of the corridors from the list, and no one replied. He said the committee now has 96 miles to designate.

The Freight Plan Consultant team pulled up a map showing the 8 corridors plus other candidate corridors that met three or more criteria.

Steve Boecking asked about US 287 to Wichita Falls, which came up at the Ft. Worth stakeholder workshop. He noted that a lot of trucks use that route.

Judge Emmett noted SH 114 below it meets more criteria. He commented that Commissioner Vandergriff is very interested in US 75 heading due north out of Dallas into Sherman. There was a lot of feedback from that region. When something happens on I-35, trucks use US 75.

Chris Evilia added he heard from a colleague in Sherman that US 75 carries more truck traffic than I-35 in Oklahoma. It is a bit shorter, and trucks can avoid some toll road sections.

Joe Bryan stated US 75 is the "default" for CRFCs in Oklahoma. The Oklahoma statewide freight plan will designate as many CRFC miles on US 75 as possible.

Judge Emmett stated US 75 is a "common sense" corridor, and wondered why it did not score higher. Maybe because it has so much traffic overall, it did not count as having 25 percent trucks.

Paula Dowell showed freight tonnage by corridor on the map; US 75 has considerable volumes.

Will Walter stated there was only a small section of US 75 outside of the urbanized boundary.

Steve Boecking clarified that a good portion of US 75 is already included in the MPO-designated Critical Urban Freight Corridor miles.

Martin Molloy noted that in the first go-around of CRFC scoring (presented in the May TxFAC meeting), an 11-mile stretch from Anna to Sherman was included, and was highly rated.

Judge Emmett asked if anyone disagreed with including those 11 miles. Steve Boecking noted that the 11 miles are very important to the DFW region..

Caroline Mays returned to the discussion of US 287 vs. SH 114. SH 114 scores higher, but US 287 is a major corridor and is used by many oversize/overweight vehicles.

Chris Evilia acknowledged the mileage restrictions, and suggested US 287 as far as Decatur, which seemed to be the highest-scoring segment. Caroline Mays noted the logical terminus would be US 380.

Roger Beall stated US 287 from Ft. Worth to south of Wichita Falls is about 82 miles.

Judge Emmett inquired why is US 287 ranked lower than SH 114, since the tonnage looks about the same.

Randy Brogoitti noted the Lufkin to Tyler corridor meets three or more criteria. Will Walter stated that corridor is 70 miles long.

Judge Emmett asked about the length from Lufkin to Jacksonville, connecting I-69 and US 79; Will Walter said it was about 50 miles. Judge Emmett asked for the committee's thoughts.

Roger Guenther inquired about freight volumes between Beaumont and Lufkin; the map did not show high levels.

Judge Emmett stated freight volumes are also high on US 259, which connects to I-20. US 259 from Nacogdoches to Kilgore is around 54 miles, but US 259 from I-20 to US 79 is 18 miles. He suggested that smaller segment for consideration.

Caroline Mays summarized the discussion up to that point. US 75 for 11 miles, Lufkin to Jacksonville for 50 miles, and US 259 from I-20 to US 79 for 18 miles. Only 17 miles are left for designation.

Steve Boecking asked if the group could revisit the SH 114/US 287 area again.

Paula Dowell suggested SH 199, which connects Ft. Worth to SH 114. SH 199 from FM 51 to US 281 is around 17 miles.

Judge Emmett noted US 380 from I-35 to US 287 has high freight volumes, and is roughly 17 miles; maybe that segment makes more sense. He asked for concurrence, and the committee members agreed.

Judge Emmett concluded that in addition to the 8 high-ranking corridors the TxFAC added US 75 (11 miles), Lufkin to Jacksonville (50 miles), US 259 from I-20 to US 79 (18 miles), and US 380 from I-35 to US 287 (17 miles). Rolando Ortiz made a motion to approve; Martin Molloy seconded. All were in favor.

6. Freight Needs, Project Identification, Gaps and Project Prioritization Criteria

Judge Emmett stated the team is now getting into project identification. This is a draft, but it will need to be finalized within the next few months.

Freight Needs

Paula Dowell provided an overview of the process which includes identifying freight network needs, identifying projects which help address those needs, and prioritizing the projects. She explained where TxDOT needs feedback from the TxFAC.

Ms. Dowell discussed the process of identifying freight needs. The project team identified needs in six categories: mobility and reliability; safety; freight asset utilization and management; alternative routes; frontage road needs; and rural road freight needs.

Chris Evilia asked if there was consideration for areas with two-way frontage roads. Ms. Dowell said not yet, but the team is aware of the issue.

Lauren Garduño asked if Mr. Evilia was referring to urban areas. Sometimes rural two-way frontage roads exist, which serve a different purpose. Mr. Evilia said yes, he was thinking of the Midland/Odessa area.

Erin Ford asked if bridge condition was factored into the analysis; Ms. Dowell said yes.

Steve Boecking asked if the analysis gives weight to population growth projections. Ms. Dowell replied that forecasted levels of service for roadways are factored in.

Rolando Ortiz inquired if input from the statewide workshops will be used to develop the list of needs; Ms. Dowell said yes.

Martin Molloy recalled there were four “buckets” of criteria used to designate the overall THFN, and asked how that related to the needs assessment process.

Ms. Dowell noted it was a good question. During the network designation process, the team looked at the importance of a corridor to freight. The process of determining needs looks at the performance of the corridors.

Mr. Molloy agreed with Steve Boecking that future growth projections need to be included. He asked if the needs assessment would be applied to the whole map. Ms. Mays said yes, it will be applied to the whole THFN.

Mr. Molloy asked if all highways need frontage roads.

Paula Dowell said there are other criteria within the frontage roads category, so it's not as simple as "yes or no" for frontage roads – it depends on alternative routes, travel time, etc. Caroline Mays added that sometimes a detour can be over 50 miles long if I-10 shuts down in west Texas, since there are no frontage roads.

Clark Greer asked where communication fits into the determination of needs. It is important to be able to communicate with drivers about routes, delays, etc. Ms. Mays stated technology and communication are included throughout the needs criteria. Ms. Dowell added the team has a technology needs category, but is still trying to get data for it (e.g. dead zones for cell coverage).

Paula Dowell continued, discussing mobility/reliability and safety needs maps.

Judge Emmett noticed the Truck Involved Fatal Crashes map legend says fatal crashes are shown on a per-mile basis, but that looks very high. Some corridors are shown as having over 3 fatal crashes per mile. Over a 100-mile segment, does that mean there were 300 deaths?

Paula Dowell said the number of crashes is actually shown by segment, not by mile – so that would mean 3 fatalities for the segment. Judge Emmett asked the team to update the map legend.

Chris Evilia suggested that the team analyze crashes per vehicle miles traveled (VMT) instead of crashes per mile. Ms. Dowell said yes, they are still working on that data.

Drew Crutcher agreed that crashes per VMT is a better matrix and may tell a better story. Some areas that seem high for crashes may actually be safer on a per-miles-traveled basis.

Paula Dowell continued, discussing asset management and utilization maps.

Erin Ford asked if road and bridge conditions are declining overall in the state, or if TxDOT is keeping up with repairs.

Lauren Garduño stated that bridge conditions are actually improving, while pavement conditions have remained relatively flat.

Judge Emmett noted the new pavement grooving on I-10 in the region is remarkable; it's so quiet.

Chris Evilia clarified that "poor condition" bridges do not include "functionally obsolete" categories.

Drew Crutcher asked about the cost-effectiveness of improving a poor-condition bridge vs. increasing bridge clearance – how can the two be compared?

Lauren Garduño stated TxDOT is not trying to compare them in terms of which is more effective or higher priority; it is just looking to determine what is out there. The cost-effectiveness discussion may come into play later on. He noted that we need to look at both poor bridge conditions and vertical clearance.

Rolando Ortiz asked if 14 to 16 foot clearance is sufficient for tractor trailers. Ms. Mays said the previous Freight Plan included a recommendation to raise overall freight network clearance to 18 feet 6 inches. That discussion is going on internally and TxDOT is taking action on the recommendation.

Drew Crutcher asked if TxDOT follows up with bridge strike accidents. In Midland/Odessa they usually involve oil equipment. Does TxDOT look for damages from the companies?

Lauren Garduño said yes, they do follow up with the insurance companies for compensation.

Paula Dowell continued, discussing the frontage roads, rural roads, and alternative routes maps. She noted that there over 668 miles of interstates without frontage roads.

Drew Crutcher inquired if two-way frontage roads were included; Ms. Dowell said not yet.

Project Identification

The team moved on to discuss the highway freight project identification process. Lauren Garduño provided an overview of Unified Transportation Program (UTP), which TxDOT uses to guide development and funding of projects over a 10-year period. The Districts and Divisions and MPOs work together to identify projects. The UTP includes 12 categories of funding from three sources – federal, state highway, and non-traditional funding. The UTP must be adopted by the Commission by August 31st of each year. Propositions 1 and 7 have made a big difference in planning forecasts; the current UTP includes about \$70 billion and the \$100 million FAST Act freight formula funds are included in this amount. Category 4 was re-funded only recently, with about \$11 billion. TxDOT is looking to use Freight Plan criteria for selecting projects for Category 4 funding for rural and urban connectivity. Category 11 received an infusion of \$2 billion for energy sector projects. Freight projects can be included in multiple categories of funding. TxDOT is required by SB20 and Sunset Commission to include performance-based planning, so the Freight Plan scoring process is included in TxDOT processes as well.

Chris Evilia added that once TxDOT does their work on project lists, the MPOs review and see how they match up with MPO lists. He added that TxDOT's performance-based planning is followed by the MPO's and noted that it might differ a little.

Mr. Garduño added that TxDOT depends on the MPOs to identify and prioritize projects in the MPO areas.

Paula Dowell discussed the process of mapping the UTP projects compared to freight needs. There is about \$7.4 billion across 867 projects on the Highway Freight Network in the UTP. Within the next 5 years, there are 808 projects totaling \$6.4 billion. TxDOT could apply the \$100 million in federal funding to these projects.

Caroline Mays reiterated that the Freight Plan update can include both fully-funded and partially funded projects; however, it cannot include partially-funded projects within the 5-Freight Investment Plan required by FAST Act.

Mr. Garduño noted that it makes sense to have a large amount of projects partially funded projects in the pipeline in order to take advantage of potential future federal funds designated for shovel-ready projects. Paul Cristina inquired whether partially-funded projects may be eligible for other grants like INFRA, etc. Caroline Mays said yes, some projects only need partial funding to make up the gap and that makes them great candidates for INFRA or TIGER grants.

Paula Dowell continued, showing maps which overlay the UTP projects on freight network needs. Gaps are identified where there are needs, but no projects.

Lauren Garduño said the UTP does not necessarily list every single project in every category; sometimes there are groups of projects. The project team may need to go to the TxDOT Project Tracker to review individual projects and make sure everything is included. That may reduce the amount of gaps across the network.

Paula Dowell clarified that when evaluating rural freight project needs, the team looked at energy production and two-lane roads.

Ms. Dowell continued to discuss next steps in the process. The team will review how well the UTP projects address the needs identified. There is more detailed analysis to come, including further analysis on gaps.

Martin Molloy asked what the colors on map are intended to designate. Ms. Dowell replied they represent aggregated needs – mobility, safety, etc.

7. Draft Freight Plan Projects

Paula Dowell discussed highway freight project prioritization, which includes developing screening criteria, weighting the criteria, and applying them to the project list. The criteria relate back to the eight main Freight Plan goal areas: asset management and utilization; safety; mobility and connectivity; multimodal connectivity; economic competitiveness; stewardship; sustainable funding; and customer service. She showed a list of proposed highway freight project prioritization criteria.

Rolando Ortiz asked if the 2,000 acre “mega-sites” are considered one facility or several.

Ms. Dowell said mega-sites are normally contiguous. They don’t all have to have one owner, but should have the ability to assemble together.

Bruce Mann noted the list on Slide 60 should say “encourages truck to rail diversion” instead of “encourage”, and it also might be better to say “conversion” instead of “diversion”.

Paul Cristina asked how this discussion relates to the criteria recently discussed. Paula Dowell replied the criteria relate back to the eight Freight Plan goal areas.

Judge Emmett asked the committee not to make the mistake of thinking this is like the FAST Act criteria for the CRFCs where a project has to meet 4 or 5 criteria to be viable.

Caroline Mays recommended the group move on to a discussion of the project lists. The list of highway projects is very thick, so it was not printed for the TxFAC, but is available online. She asked members to review the projects to make sure TxDOT is not missing something critical. She reminded the group that the list will be updated after the latest UTP approval.

Judge Emmett asked how the project team developed the list; Ms. Mays replied they overlaid UTP projects onto network needs.

Judge Emmett noted the project team and TxFAC spent considerable time creating the list of projects for the previous Freight Plan and asked what happened to that list. Ms. Mays replied that many of those projects are still in the updated list, if they have not already been let.

Judge Emmett recommended that the team start with the old list, show which projects have been let, and show which are recommended to be added. He asked why the TxFAC should care about new projects that in the UTP that were not identified during the last round.

Caroline Mays stated the new projects are important because fully-funded projects in the UTP on the Highway Freight Network are eligible to be included in the updated 5-Year Freight Investment Plan.

Paula Dowell said the project team has already started comparing the old vs. the new project lists. If projects are in both the old and new lists, those will be included. Some projects on the old list may not be part of the updated UTP – the group can discuss those, but they probably will not be in the five-year plan. There could also be projects not included in the old list that are now in the UTP and do address freight needs; those may also be part of the 5-Year Freight Plan.

Judge Emmett stated that he was trying to respect the committee's time. Many projects in the UTP, even those within freight "needs" areas, are likely not freight-related. He again suggested the team start with the old Freight Plan highway project list and show recommended changes. The idea of starting over is too much.

Caroline Mays noted the updated list is actually not much bigger than the old list, but said the team would go back and dissect the list as requested.

Paula Dowell discussed the draft rail needs and projects list. The Class I and Short Line lists were developed in collaboration with railroads, and will be further reviewed and refined as the process moves forward.

Paul Cristina said he reviewed the Class I list and did not see any issues, but has not yet reviewed the Short Line list. It is important that the projects listed have a clear public benefit. Brenda Mainwaring added that projects must have a public sponsor; they need to have a Class I acknowledgement; and all grade separation projects need to have a public benefit.

John Larue asked if ports were included in rail project discussions. Do Short Line port rail projects get included with rail projects or port projects within the Freight Plan?

Paul Treangen thanked TxDOT for the opportunity to include Short Line projects in the TFMP. Many Short Line projects have positive impacts on rural communities. The Texas Short Line and Regional Railroad Association sent out information to members and asked for projects that would have a public benefit (such as moving freight from highway to rail, creating jobs, and spurring economic development, etc.). Projects on the list are on Short Line properties.

John Larue noted ports owns certain Short Line railroads and have third party agreements, but ports were not included in the discussion on Short Line projects. Brenda Mainwaring noted railroads will work with their port partners on projects.

Paul Treangen stated the association would be happy to include “inside the gate” port rail projects. Ms. Mainwaring suggested “inside the gate” projects be included within the port project list.

Ms. Mainwaring added the list of rail projects is not a candy list; it is a collaborative effort between railroads and public entities. She felt this list is far superior to the one in the first Freight Plan. Also, including a project on the list does not imply a financial commitment from the railroads.

Joe Bryan discussed the ports and waterways projects list. The list was developed based on the 2015-2016 Ports Capital Program and is a work in progress; Texas ports have invested more than \$1 billion since 2010, but there are many more needs unmet. Houston makes up half the identified investment needed. Projects and numbers are still coming in from the ports; Texas City is not yet included.

John Larue clarified that many ports have funding for channel improvements so that category will be pulled out of the Freight Plan list.

Mr. Bryan agreed. Houston has a majority of the roadway access projects on the list. As numbers keep coming in from ports, the roadway project costs will continue to increase.

Judge Emmett asked where the list came from; Mr. Larue replied it was compiled from port capital programs.

Paula Dowell said for the purposes of the Freight Plan, only port access projects on the Highway Freight Network can be included.

Joe Bryan noted the rail project number does not include Freeport rail projects either. Again, this is a draft project list which will change as more items are included.

Paul Cristina asked if these are inside the gate projects; Mr. Bryan said no. Those that are inside the gate will be removed.

Judge Emmett said if no inside the gate projects are allowed, then technically the TFMP does not include any port projects – just port access projects.

Caroline Mays noted many ports feel that TxDOT needs to focus on access, and not spend energy on inside the gate projects – much like railroads and airports. TxDOT's main goal is providing access to those facilities, and not interfering with what is inside the gates.

Judge Emmett stated projects like on-dock rail at Bayport are mobility-focused, so they should probably be included.

John Larue said it is not necessarily inside or outside the gate that matters, but rather the type of project.

Bruce Mann noted to Caroline Mays' point, money is finite, so TxDOT should probably start with outside the gate instead of inside the gate projects.

Judge Emmett asked if the next step was ports getting together to review the list; John Larue said yes, TPA will call a meeting to discuss projects.

Paul Cristina inquired if there was still time to make changes to the lists; Ms. Mays said yes. She added that the project team has not yet addressed specific border-related projects, but that is part of the next steps.

Paul Cristina stated the railroads need to know about any projects for inclusion in the Freight Plan that involve railroads. He also asked for an update on an ongoing TxDOT port study.

Chris Sallese of Dannenbaum said yes, as part of that study, TxDOT is compiling a list of projects that will be shared. It is mainly focused on last-mile connectors to the ports. Caroline Mays asked that the list be provided ASAP.

Paula Dowell discussed the air cargo access projects list. The list was compiled from individual airport plans, and supplemented with input from the airports. There are approximately \$3.2 million in unfunded access needs.

Rolando Ortiz said he would get in touch with local officials about outstanding Laredo Airport data.

Ms. Dowell stated all the projects included are outside the gate.

Judge Emmett asked if someone could go through the airport project list and scrub it. There seems to be projects on the list that are many miles away from any major airport. For example, there is a project listed in downtown Houston.

Ms. Dowell said yes, the team will review the list and will include an explanation if a project does not seem directly related to an airport.

Judge Emmett asked if the lists would be revised before the next TxFAC meeting; Caroline Mays said yes.

8. Working Lunch

TxDOT Federal Affairs staff Melissa Meyer delivered a presentation on Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grants. INFRA continues the FASTLANE grant program established under the FAST Act, with some changes. The deadline for submitting applications is November 2, 2017. Approximately \$1.5 billion from FY 2017 is being combined with FY 2018. There are certain statutory requirements for INFRA grants – such as highway projects must be on the NHFN – but other selection criteria are “squishy” and not necessarily required by law. Projects can be awarded grants in “small” or “large” categories – small projects have a total cost under \$60 million, while large projects cost over \$100 million. Ten percent of funding is set aside for small projects; 10 percent is set aside for projects in rural areas.

Steve Boecking asked how do they distinguish between small and large projects.

Judge Erin Ford inquired why there is such a high set-aside for rural areas. Ms. Meyer replied it is probably due to lobbying from rural state senators.

Ms. Meyer continued, discussing the grant selection criteria in four categories: support for national or regional economic vitality; leveraging federal funding; potential for innovation; and performance and accountability. Ms. Meyer noted that USDOT is really looking for shovel-ready projects; they would rather not select projects in the planning/environmental stages. They are looking for projects that need limited federal funding.

Rolando Ortiz asked if an example of state and local policy changes might include Transportation Reinvestment Zones. Ms. Meyer said sure; the direction is fuzzy.

Caroline Mays asked if the Freight Plan critical urban or rural miles would qualify for these grants; Ms. Meyer said yes. Ms. Mays asked if the miles need to be certified; Ms. Meyer replied as long as certification is anticipated, it should be acceptable.

Judge Emmett asked if all projects need to be submitted through TxDOT. Ms. Meyer said no, any government agency can submit an application.

Paul Cristina asked about TxDOT’s process for compiling candidate projects. Ms. Meyer said TxDOT sent out a request for projects to senior staff at each district. TxDOT will keep the TxFAC in the loop; they are in the initial phases of project selection.

Mr. Cristina inquired on how TxDOT will consider and evaluate projects to be submitted for the grant. He also asked if TxDOT would provide a letter of support for other, non-TxDOT projects, and Ms. Meyer said TxDOT does not provide letters of support as a matter of practice.

Barbara Koslov noted TxDOT submitted applications for several large projects under FASTLANE. Will TxDOT be resubmitting these under INFRA? Ms. Meyer said TxDOT is widening the scope, and re-evaluating the overall process and projects selected.

Bruce Mann said last time around, if a project did not receive support from TxDOT it would be challenging for the project to be selected, and asked if that was likely to change with the new administration; Ms. Meyer did not know.

Paul Treangen asked if TxDOT might reconsider their position on supporting other projects, especially those without any funding requested from TxDOT.

Brenda Mainwaring stated that if TxDOT is not submitting rail projects, then why not support rail. She also said that TxDOT and railroad companies have had many conversations about projects. A good portion of these would leverage private funds. Who should lead the discussion of what the state's priorities should be in terms of submitting projects?

Caroline Mays said she believes the TxFAC should have a role in advising TxDOT on what types of projects should be put forward for consideration.

Brenda Mainwaring noted there needed to be a consistent measure of rail plans which quantifies their value. Would the freight plan process be used to identify and prioritize INFRA grant projects?

Ms. Meyer said it could be. TxDOT would like to keep the door open for coordination on future grant opportunities.

Judge Emmett asked who makes decision on projects and who can submit projects? He also stated that since all government entities can submit projects, and USDOT can evaluate those projects as they see fit, other agencies should be looking into submitting their own projects.

Rolando Ortiz said that without TxDOT support, he is concerned that non-TxDOT projects will not carry the same weight with USDOT; Judge Emmett said he was not sure that was the case.

Ms. Meyer stated there were a variety of projects awarded FASTLANE grants, including port and rail projects.

Paul Cristina posited that if TxDOT provides letters of support to some projects but not others, it could affect the selection process and it not be a good message for the freight community. Ms. Meyer clarified that TxDOT does not provide any letters of support at all. Paula Dowell stated several other states have that policy as well.

John LaRue stated that in the past, TxDOT gave letters of support to everyone, but it was meaningless because it didn't indicate any priorities.

9. Draft Freight Plan Chapters

Paula Dowell moved on to discuss updated Freight Plan chapters. The project team decided to review Chapters 2, 4, and 9 with the TxFAC first because these have the fewest amount of changes from the previous plan. She provided an outline of the complete TFMP chapter list; one new chapter has been added since the last plan, Chapter 6.

Ms. Dowell discussed Chapter 2, Strategic Goals. She reviewed the eight Freight Plan goal areas, which had been compared against national and statewide goals and vetted through stakeholders and the TxFAC. A table showed which elements were changed in Chapter 2, and why.

Barbara Koslov clarified that the project team was describing how Chapter 2 was updated, then the TxFAC would have a chance to review and comment.

Judge Emmett asked if the TxFAC was being asked to approve chapters today; Caroline Mays said no.

Rolando Ortiz stated it would be helpful to have a copy of the chapter that shows exactly what changed from the first Freight Plan. Paula Dowell agreed, and also referred to the table showing which parts had been changed.

Caroline Mays said the TxFAC's homework is to review the chapters. Paul Cristina asked about the deadline; Ms. Mays said probably two weeks. The team will be sending more chapters to review in the interim as well.

Judge Emmett expressed concern about the timeline, considering all chapters need to be approved in August. He thought the committee would be approving Chapters 2, 4, and 9 today.

Caroline Mays said if TxFAC was OK with that, it would definitely make things easier.

Brenda Mainwaring stated the railroads have comments on Chapters 4 and 9.

Judge Emmett asked if there were any comments on Chapter 2.

Martin Molloy felt something needed to be added about freight network resiliency following incidents.

Judge Emmett said he would not push for a vote today, but reminded members that they needed to be ready to approve all chapters in August.

Georgi Jasenovic mentioned the previous Chapter 2 was 8 pages, while the new one is 15 pages, so there are some substantial changes.

Bruce Mann suggested that it be clarified what needs to be done per the FAST Act and what is discretionary.

Judge Emmett recommended the project team "redline" the chapters so the committee can see what changed.

Paula Dowell discussed Chapter 4, Freight Policies, Strategies, and Institutions. TxDOT funding sources were updated since the previous plan. She discussed a table showing which elements changed in Chapter 4, and why.

Paul Cristina said there were some wording issues in section 4.35 (page 4-21) regarding railroad funding. He said the railroads would provide updated text. The current text says railroads are “largely” privately funded – it should say they are privately funded.

Judge Emmett assumed the “largely” was included because of the South Orient rail line.

Brenda Mainwaring said some references to rail revenue are not necessarily accurate. There is a section about railroads on page 4-10 which states that Short Lines are of strategic importance – something similar should be included for Class Is as well. She also noted a blank chart for freight projects on page 4-17; Paula Dowell replied it was because of a page break.

Bruce Mann noticed page 4-23 states “leveraging has resulted in Texas ports advancing their own capital improvement projects... to meet customers’ current and future needs”. Ports are not necessarily meeting customers’ needs, that’s why there are projects to be completed. Caroline Mays asked for the ports to send suggested language.

Judge Emmett asked if there were any petrochemical improvements planned for the Beaumont/Port Arthur area; Caroline Mays said yes. Judge Emmett said the chapter should list all ports, not just some. Bruce Mann said there was probably over a billion in investment expected across the gulf coast.

Paula Dowell discussed Chapter 9, Overview of Trends, Needs, and Issues. The project team collected and analyzed the most recent data, and incorporated input from stakeholders and the TxFAC. She reviewed key trends impacting freight flows, and eight key freight transportation challenge areas. She discussed a table showing which elements changed in Chapter 9, and why.

Brenda Mainwaring stated the chapter includes only a passing mention of ports and rail, and no mention of waterways. There is a fairly lengthy mention of energy, but nothing about the sand and other equipment that is heavily dependent on rail. There is no mention of rail utilization of freight technology as the discussion focuses primarily on autonomous trucks and how removing regulatory barriers on technology deployment across all modes would benefit freight, it only mentions truck drivers. Overall, this chapter is about roads. If it is intended to be multimodal, the chapter needs to be re-thought.

Judge Emmett asked whether exhibit 9-4 (page 5) referred to empty and loaded rail containers, or rail cars. Ms. Dowell said it was containers. Judge Emmett recommended removing that exhibit since it could be misconstrued; auto components, beer, etc. are major cargo components for railroads.

Randy Brogoitti asked if CNG was addressed in the trends section. New CNG terminals coming on line will have a huge impact. Ms. Dowell said not yet, but the Freight Plan chapters are

actually summaries; detailed tech memos provide greater detail. Information on CNG could be included in the chapter itself.

Paul Cristina agreed that the overall tone of the chapter needed to change.

Bruce Mann noted page 15 states Texas is now “poised” to become a testing ground for autonomous vehicles. It already is a testing ground.

10. Open Discussion

Caroline Mays stated the next meeting would be in Dallas on August 24, 2017. No location has been selected yet, but the team is trying to get as close as possible to downtown and is working with Judge Jenkins’ office.

Judge Emmett said with all due respect to Judge Jenkins, TxDOT should not settle for a less-than-ideal location just because it is in Dallas. The meeting can be held in Ft. Worth or another location. It should be convenient for the committee. Paul Cristina mentioned that BNSF would be more than happy to host.

Caroline Mays said the TxFAC will also be meeting in September and October, as there is a lot to discuss in the coming months. The October meeting is needed to finalize the plan before Commission approval.

Ms. Mays recapped several action items for the project team:

- Within the needs assessment safety category, use crashes/VMT as a better matrix
- Review TxDOT Project Tracker to make sure all projects are included
- Compare updated highway project list with list from first Freight Plan to show changes
- Facilitate discussion with ports to revise port project list
- Refine air cargo list to those projects providing direct access to airports
- Provide international border crossings/ports-of-entry project list
- Provide redlined chapters so members can see what changed between previous and updated TFMP, and tables of chapter changes vs. requirements under the FAST Act
- Update chapters in response to TxFAC comments

Judge Emmett offered to provide a tour of TranStar’s emergency operations center to any interested parties.

Meeting adjourned 2:40pm